

judgment as to whether the 'Caga-sébo' is predominantly harmful. It is still possible that it is periodically busy in the destruction of noxious insects. Further examination and observation in this direction, therefore, are desirable, and I hope soon to be able to furnish some supplementary data on this subject."

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XVIII.—*Notes on a small Collection of Birds from Algeria.*

By HARRY F. WITHERBY.

So much has been published both in Germany and in this country on the birds of Morocco, Algeria, and Tunis that I shall make my remarks in this paper as brief as possible, and shall include in the list which follows only those species of which specimens were actually obtained. The collection was made by my wife and myself in Algeria in March, April, and May 1904.

We stayed from March 7th to 16th at Biskra, the well-known oasis. Its predominant feature is the date-palm, but here and there are gardens with acacias, mimosas, and other trees and shrubs, while there is some land with corn. A very short time suffices to get out of the oasis, however, either into the flat desert or into rocky and barren hills.

On March 16th we journeyed north and collected until April 7th at Hammam Meskoutine, in the hills near Constantine. A good deal of the land there is cultivated, but most of the surrounding hills are covered with wild olive-trees or thickly overgrown with various shrubs, while here and there are dense thickets and wild and thickly wooded glens.

From April 14th to May 6th we were at Hammam R'Hira, a few miles west of Algiers, where the chief attraction is a large pine-forest, which, unlike most pine-woods, is so thick with undergrowth as to be in some parts almost impenetrable.

From May 8th–23rd we collected near Les Glacières, a small hotel in the Little Atlas Mountains not far from

Algiers. There, at altitudes of from 5000 to 6200 feet, the mountains are covered with a magnificent cedar-forest.

It will be realized from these brief descriptions of the places in which we worked that the birds of each district were very different. A few species were, of course, common to all the localities, but each place contained some which we saw nowhere else.

Algeria is easily accessible, and the travelling, though slow, is easy, so that I can thoroughly recommend the country to any ornithologist who desires an interesting holiday. As attractions, he will find many extremely interesting geographical forms of our British birds, besides many kinds rare here but common there.

The study of the geographical forms of birds has advanced at such a pace in recent years that one begins to hope that enough material will soon be accumulated for some ornithologist to take a wider view of the subject than that of the systematist. Will not Dr. Hartert's work, for instance, afford a sufficiently complete and ordered statement of the geographical forms existing in the Palæarctic region to form a basis for studying many general questions regarding geographical variation?

#### TURDUS VISCIVORUS L.

*Turdus viscivorus deichleri* Erlanger, Ornith. Monatsb. 1897, p. 192.

*Turdus viscivorus* L.; Erlanger, J. f. O. 1898, p. 248.

♂ ad., May 16; ♀ ad., May 20; ♂ juv., May 19. Les Glacières, Little Atlas.

The resident Mistletoe-Thrush in Algeria is, at all events in summer, a very pale-coloured bird. For this reason the late Freiherr von Erlanger separated it under the name of *T. v. deichleri*, but afterwards, having examined freshly moulted birds, he concluded that the pale coloration was due to bleaching. I have not had an opportunity of examining freshly moulted skins, but certainly the adult specimens which I obtained in Algeria in summer are extremely pale on the upper side, and have only a slight tinge of buff

on the breast and flanks. This may be due to bleaching, but, if so, it seems to me remarkable that the Mistletoe-Thrush should become thus bleached while other birds from the region of the Little Atlas do not seem to be affected in the same way. At a considerable distance the paleness of this form is very noticeable.

The Mistletoe-Thrush was fairly common, but exceedingly wild and difficult to approach, in the cedar-forest on the Little Atlas. We did not notice it below 5000 feet, but it was seen up to the highest altitude, over 6000 feet. On May 6th I found two empty nests, from which, I think, young had flown, and another containing three addled eggs. On May 19th we found fledged young, and on May 20th a nest containing three young about a week old and one that had died.

*TURDUS MERULA ALGIRUS.*

*Merula algira* Madarász, Ann. Mus. Nat. Hung. i. 1903, p. 559.

♀, March 19; ♂, March 25; ♂, March 30. II. Meskoutine.

The Algerian Blackbird is distinguishable from the Morocco bird (*T. m. mauritanicus* Hartert, Nov. Zool. vol. ix. p. 323). The male of *T. m. algirus* has a smaller wing, viz. 120–124 mm., compared with 126–130 mm. The female is also smaller than that of *T. m. mauritanicus*, while its throat and upper breast are paler, and the light and dark markings are more in contrast than in that species. In the female also the dark markings of the centre of the feathers are pronounced down to the middle of the breast, whereas in *T. m. mauritanicus* they are only noticeable on the throat and lower throat.

As compared with typical Blackbirds from Europe the males of *T. m. algirus* are shorter in the wing, while the females are markedly different, being in general colour dark slaty grey on the under side instead of reddish brown.

In his original description of *T. m. algirus*, Herr Madarász contrasted the male with that of *T. m. cabreræ*. One of

the distinctions used was the size of the first primary, which in *T. m. algerus* he stated was longer than the primary-coverts, while in *T. m. cabreræ* it was equal and in typical *T. merula* shorter. I find the length of the first primary variable. The female of the Algerian bird was unknown to Herr Madarász at the time that he described the male.

Blackbirds were well distributed but not common in the north of Algeria. They were very shy and much more silent than our home birds. The alarm-note was not so frequently uttered, and was even harsher than that of the English species. The song was shorter, more broken, and not so sweet. A nest with eggs was found in a bush at an altitude of about 6000 feet in the Little Atlas on May 18th.

#### SAXICOLA LUGENS HALOPHILA.

Erlanger, J. f. O. 1899, p. 231; Whitaker, Bull. B. O. C. xiii. p. 15.

♂ ad., ♀ ad., ♂ ad. Biskra, March 10.

The interesting distinction between the female of this western form and that of typical *S. lugens* has been clearly pointed out both by the late Freiherr von Erlanger and by Mr. Whitaker, but I have been unable to compare females of typical *S. lugens*. The male of typical *S. lugens* has rusty under tail-coverts, while in *S. halophila* they are white or nearly white, but otherwise the males of the two species are alike. We found this bird at Biskra only, where it was fairly common on the edge of the desert. Unlike most Wheatears, it was decidedly tame. Mr. Whitaker ('Ibis,' 1895, p. 94) writes of it as shy and retiring.

#### SAXICOLA DESERTI TEMM.

♂ ad. Biskra, March 11.

This specimen is decidedly small, the wing measuring only 3.5 inches. The buff tips to the feathers below the nape are worn, so that the black of the basal half of the feathers is shown to such an extent as to form an indistinct nuchal band.

This species we found only near Biskra, and not commonly.

## SAXICOLA ALBICOLLIS CATERINÆ.

♂ ad. H. R'Hira, April 26.

One of the characters distinguishing this bird from its eastern representative (*S. albicollis* (Vieill.)) given by Mr. Whitaker ('Ibis,' 1898, p. 624) seems to be variable. I refer to the scapulars, which are not always cream-coloured, there being often much black in them. In my specimen, for example, the scapulars are rather more black than cream-coloured.

This Wheatear was common and breeding near Hammam R'Hira.

## SAXICOLA LEUCURA (Gmel.).

♀ ad. Biskra, March 13.

This wild and conspicuous Wheatear was common on the rocky hills near Biskra. When I first heard it singing I searched everywhere for a Rock-Thrush, which I certainly thought to be the performer. On March 13th we found a pair building in a crevice of a rock, and it was remarkable that the low wall of loose stones in front of the entrance had been built first, before the nest was made. We saw the birds in the act of carrying dry grass for the nest, and a few pieces were already in the hole. The "wall" was some two and a half inches high and very loosely made, and it looked a difficult task for the birds to carry all the nesting-material over it.

## PRATINCOLA RUBICOLA (L.).

♂ ad. H. R'Hira, May 2.

The Stonechat was fairly common at H. Meskoutine and near H. R'Hira. A pair had fledged young at the beginning of April.

## PRATINCOLA MOUSSIERI (Olphe-Galliard).

♂ ad., ♂ ad., ♂ ad. Les Glacières, May 12 &amp; 16.

It seemed rather strange to find this bird at Biskra in the desert region and also in the Little Atlas up to an altitude of 6000 feet, but probably it does not breed so far south as Biskra. Judging by its habits only, I should class it as an undoubted Chat.

## RUTICILLA PHÆNICURUS (L.).

♂ ad. H. Meskoutine, March 26.

♂ ad. H. R'Hira, April 17.

Redstarts were fairly common. A nest contained five eggs near H. Meskoutine on April 3rd.

## CYANECULA SUECICA (L.).

♀ ad. H. Meskoutine, April 4.

A female was the only specimen secured, and I presume that it belongs to the red-spotted form of the Bluethroat, a male of which I saw at Biskra.

## ERITHACUS RUBECULA (L.).

No. 50. ♂ ad. H. Meskoutine, March 27.

♀ ad., ♂ ad. H. R'Hira, April 15 &amp; 27.

♂ ad., ♂ ad. Les Glacières, May 9 &amp; 14.

No. 50 is distinctly different from the other specimens. It has a considerably shorter wing and a shorter and thicker bill. It seems to agree, in fact, with the English Robin (*E. r. melophilus*).

That it should be different from the other specimens is not remarkable, because at the time that I shot it I thought it must be a migrating bird by its habits. It was also extremely fat. The other four specimens were undoubtedly resident and breeding in the country. They are puzzling, and an examination of a series of the resident Algerian Robin may lead to its separation as a geographical race. My specimens are richly coloured on the breast and dark on the back, like the English bird, and unlike the typical Robin, but they have short wings (measuring in the males 690-700 mm.) and longer and finer beaks.

Robins were common in the Atlas region, especially in thick woods. They were rather wild and skulking in their habits. A nest in a niche of a cedar-trunk at an altitude of 5500 feet was nearly finished on May 20th. They appear to be late breeders in Algeria, for I saw no young.

## SYLVIA CINEREA Bechst.

♂ ad. H. Meskoutine, April 4.

I did not notice the Whitethroat before April 4, but after

that date it was common at H. Meskoutine and also at H. R'Hira.

Mr. J. H. Gurney, Jun., has recorded its arrival in Algeria on April 1st ('Ibis,' 1871, p. 300).

*SYLVIA MELANOCEPHALA* (Gmel.).

♂ ad., ♀ ad. Biskra, March 8 & 15.

The Sardinian Warbler was common in the districts that we visited, and was evidently nesting at Hammam R'Hira and at Les Glacières towards the end of April and beginning of May. The cock bird is very fussy and worries the observer with his incessant clamour.

*SYLVIA ATRICAPILLA* (L.).

♀ ad. H. Meskoutine, March 24.

The Blackcap was very common and in full song at H. Meskoutine and H. R'Hira.

*SYLVIA SUBALPINA* Bonelli.

♂ ad. Les Glacières, May 22.

The colour of the breast of the Subalpine Warbler varies considerably. Much of this is due, no doubt, to seasonal change, and some, perhaps, to individuality. But I am inclined to think that specimens from Africa will be found on examination of a good series to be heavily coloured with chestnut on the under side, while birds from Europe will be found to be more lightly coloured with pink.

A few pairs of Subalpine Warblers were evidently breeding in the scrub on the hill-sides about Les Glacières and H. R'Hira.

*SYLVIA DESERTICOLA* Tristr.

♀ ad. Biskra, March 11.

There were a few Tristram's Warblers at Biskra, but we saw the birds nowhere else. They did not appear to be breeding at Biskra up to the middle of March. Amongst other distinctions the wing-formula of this species is very different from that of *S. subalpina*.

*MELIZOPHILUS SARDUS* (Marm.).

♂ ad. Biskra, March 8.

There were a few Marmora's Warblers at Biskra amongst

the bushes in the dry river-bed, but I did not see the bird elsewhere in Algeria.

MELIZOPHILUS UNDATUS (Bodd.).

♂ ad., ♀ ad. H. R'Hira, April 20 & 21.

The Dartford Warbler was a very common breeding-bird at H. R'Hira. The female shot had an egg in the oviduct.

REGULUS IGNICAPILLUS (Brehm).

♂ ad., ♀ ad., ♂ ad., ♂ ad. Les Glacières, May 9, 10, 11, & 18.

Firecrests were common and breeding at the beginning of May in the cedar-forest on the Little Atlas at all altitudes.

PHYLLOSCOPUS TROCHILUS (L.).

♂ ad. H. R'Hira, May 1.

Judging by its organs, the Willow-Warbler was breeding at H. R'Hira.

PHYLLOSCOPUS RUFUS (Bechst.).

♀ ad., ♂ ad., ♂ ad. H. Meskoutine, April 1, 2, & 5.

The Chiffchaff was common, and a nest with two eggs which I found at H. R'Hira on May 5th evidently belonged to this species.

PHYLLOSCOPUS SIBILATRIX (Bechst.).

*Phylloscopus sibilatrix flarescens* Erlanger, J. f. O. 1899, p. 254.

♂ ad., ♂ ad. H. R'Hira, April 18 & 23.

♀ ad. Les Glacières, May 13.

I can find no constant difference in skins of Wood-Warblers from Algeria and elsewhere. The figure given by the late von Erlanger (J. f. O. 1899, Taf. v.) of the European Wood-Warbler is, I think, from a faded example, and many specimens from various parts of Europe will be found to agree perfectly with his figure of the Algerian bird. It is remarkable that there should be no difference in the Algerian breeding-bird, because its song is markedly different from that of the Wood-Warbler which breeds in England. It is unsatisfactory to attempt to describe the song, but the last notes to which we are accustomed in



England seem to be entirely wanting, and I never heard in Algeria the beautiful song of the English Wood-Warbler.

*PHYLLOSCOPUS BONELLII* (Vicill.).

♂ ad. Les Glacières, May 18.

Compared with the Wood-Warbler, Bonelli's Warbler was scarce, and was first heard and seen at H. R'Hira towards the end of April, when it was evidently commencing to breed. It was also found in the open parts of the cedar-forest round Les Glacières up to the highest point (over 6000 feet). The note and song of this charming Warbler are very clear and can be recognised at a considerable distance. Compared with other *Phylloscopi*, the bird is wild, and it usually frequents the higher portions of the trees.

*HYPOLAIS POLYGLOTTA* (Vicill.).

♂ ad. H. R'Hira, May 5.

♂ ad. Les Glacières, May 12.

After the beginning of May the Melodious Warbler became very common at H. R'Hira. Its chattering song was to be heard from every thick mass of bushes. At Les Glacières it was also common amongst the scrub. It was undoubtedly breeding, but I did not actually find a nest.

*ACROCEPHALUS PHRAGMITIS* (Bechst.).

♂ ad., ♀ ad. H. Meskoutine, March 19 & 28.

The Sedge-Warbler was fairly common at H. Meskoutine, but there were no signs of its breeding. There were one or two birds at H. R'Hira at the end of April, but they did not seem to be nesting.

*CETTIA SERICEA* (Temm.).

♂ ad. H. Meskoutine, March 26.

Cetti's Warbler was fairly common at H. Meskoutine and H. R'Hira wherever there were thickets near water.

*SCOTOCERCA INQUIETA SAHARE.*

*Scotocerca saharae* Sharpe, Cat. B. iv. p. 214.

♂ ad. Biskra, March 11.

Although there is only one specimen of this species in the British Museum collection, it has been found commonly of

late years by Messrs. Whitaker, Koenig, and others. Except that it inhabits desert instead of hilly country, its habits seem remarkably like those of its darker eastern representative (*S. inquieta*), which I met with in Persia.

PARUS MAJOR (L.).

*Parus major excelsus* Brehm; Hartert, Nov. Zool. vol. ix. p. 328.

♂ ad., ♂ ad., ♂ ad. H. R'Hira, April 17, 20, & 23.

♂ ad. Les Glacières, May 10.

Great Tits vary considerably *inter se*, and I cannot find any sufficiently constant differences in the Algerian breeding-bird to warrant its separation. It is sometimes of a brighter yellow on the under parts than typical *Parus major*, but even my four specimens vary greatly. One of them is pale and greyish on the breast, almost like *Parus aphrodite* Madarász, which, as originally described, was no doubt an individual variation.

The white mark on the inner web of the outer tail-feather is also a variable character, but it tends to become constant in the Algerian bird, in which it is usually, but by no means always, noticeable as a small spot rather than a long streak. In measurements the Algerian Great Tit equals typical *Parus major*.

The Great Tit was common and breeding at H. R'Hira and in the Little Atlas. Its note seemed to me of a much deeper pitch than that of our English Great Tit.

PARUS ATER LEDOUCCI.

♂ ad., ♂ ad., ♂ ad., ♂ ad. H. R'Hira, April 14, 17, & 20.

♀ ad. H. R'Hira, April 15.

There is considerable variation in the yellow of these specimens (compare Dixon, 'Ibis,' 1882, p. 571). In some the under side, cheeks, and ear-coverts are of such a pale yellow as to make the bird resemble in general colour typical *P. ater*. Both *P. ater atlas* Meade-Waldo and *P. ater ledoucci* are evidently geographical forms of *Parus ater*.

The Algerian Coal Tit was a very common breeding-bird in the pine-forest at H. R'Hira and in the cedar-forest on

the Little Atlas. Unlike the Great Tit and Blue Tit, it was never seen outside the forests. Its notes seemed to me much more like those of the Great Tit than those of our English Coal Tit.

PARUS CÆRULEUS ULTRAMARINUS.

♂ ad., ♀ ad. Biskra, March 7 & 9.

♀ ad. H. Meskoutine, March 26.

♀ ad. Les Glacières, May 13.

The Ultramarine Tit was fairly common wherever we travelled, when there were trees of any sort. It was common and, I think, breeding at Biskra in a garden on the edge of the desert at the beginning of March, and I found a nest in a wild olive at H. Meskoutine at the end of March, while in the cedar-forest on the Little Atlas it was common and breeding up to the highest altitudes.

CERTHIA BRACHYDACTYLA MAURITANICA.

Witherby, Bull. B. O. C. vol. xv. p. 35.

♂ ad., May 9; ♂ ad., ♂ ad., May 11; ♂ ad., May 8.  
Les Glacières.

The Algerian and Tunisian form of the Creeper, as I have already stated (*op. supra cit.*), differs from typical *Certhia brachyactyla* Brehm from Germany chiefly in its darker, more "black-and-white," and less rufous upper side and its more heavily marked flanks.

*C. b. dorotheæ* Hartert from Cyprus is even less rufous on the upper side than the Algerian form, while the flanks and under tail-coverts are greyish brown instead of rufous brown.

I may add that there is no need to compare this Algerian form of *C. brachyactyla* to see that it is altogether different from any form of *C. familiaris*.

Creepers were common and breeding in the cedar-forest on the Little Atlas at all altitudes. I found a half-finished nest in a hole in a cedar on May 14.

TROGLODYTES PARVULUS Koch.

♂ ad., ♂ juv. April 6, H. Meskoutine.

♂ ad., ♂ ad. April 22, H. R'Hira.

Wrens were common and breeding at H. Meskoutine and

at H. R'Hira. Young had just flown from one nest at H. Meskoutine on April 6th, while on the same date another contained fresh eggs.

*ANTHUS PRATENSIS* (L.).

♀ ad., ♀ ad. H. Meskoutine, March 22 & 26.

There were a few Meadow-Pipits at H. Meskoutine, but their breeding-organs were undeveloped.

*ANTHUS TRIVIALIS* (L.).

♂ ad. H. Meskoutine, March 29.

♂ ad. H. R'Hira, April 17.

The Tree-Pipit was more common than the preceding species, and the example shot on April 17th had the testes much swollen, so that the bird probably nests in Algeria, although I do not think that it has yet been recorded as doing so.

*PYCNONOTUS BARBATUS* (Desf.).

♀ ad. H. Meskoutine, March 22.

The Dusky Bulbul was everywhere common. Its sociable habits and playfulness make it an amusing bird to watch, while its beautiful notes are a delight to the ear.

*LANIUS SENATOR* L.

*Lanius senator rutilans* (Temm.); Erlanger, J. f. O. 1899, p. 502.

♂ ad. H. Meskoutine, April 2.

♀ ad. H. R'Hira, May 5.

I cannot find any constant differences in the Red-headed Shrikes from Algeria and those from Europe. The specimen shot on April 2nd was the first seen by us in Northern Algeria.

*MUSCICAPA GRISOLA* L.

♂ ad. H. R'Hira, May 5.

The Spotted Flycatcher was first noticed at H. R'Hira at the end of April, after which it was common and evidently breeding.

*MUSCICAPA ATRICAPILLA* L.

♂ ad. H. R'Hira, April 14.

This specimen agrees exactly with others from Europe.

I have been able to examine very few breeding-birds from Algeria, but from these it appears that the white frontal spot is undoubtedly larger than in European specimens. This spot varies constantly in size, owing to the abrasion of the feathers. As the feathers become abraded the spot enlarges, owing to some of the feathers having only black tips followed by a patch of white, but in European specimens the "white-middled feathers" do not extend far enough to enable abrasion to make the spot so large as in the Algerian breeding-birds which I have examined.

Von Erlanger distinguished (J. f. O. 1899, p. 505) the Algerian form of the Pied Flycatcher under the name of *Muscicapa atricapilla speculigera* (de Selys).

The specimen which I obtained may have been a migratory bird, as its breeding-organs were undeveloped.

CARDUELIS ELEGANS AFRICANA.

*Acanthis carduelis africanus* Hartert, Vög. pal. Fauna, p. 69.

♀ ad., ♀ ad. Biskra, March 8 & 9.

Goldfinches from Algeria are intermediate in size between *C. e. parva* (the Madeciran race) and typical *C. elegans*. I do not think that there is any constant difference in coloration between *C. e. africana* and typical *C. carduelis*, but the smaller size of the former is important.

Goldfinches were common at Biskra, and extremely so at H. Meskoutine, where I was continually delighted by meeting with large flocks of these charming Finches.

SERINUS SERINUS (L.).

♀ ad. Biskra, March 6.

♂ ad. H. Meskoutine, March 29.

The Serin was fairly common in all the districts visited.

LIGURINUS CHLORIS AURANTIVENTRIS Cab.

5 ♂ ad., 1 ♀ ad. H. Meskoutine, March 17 to April 5.

This brilliantly coloured form of the Greenfinch was quite the most common bird at H. Meskoutine, and was fairly common at H. R'Hira. A nest contained eggs on April 1.

*COCCOTHRAUSTES VULGARIS BUVRYI* Cab.

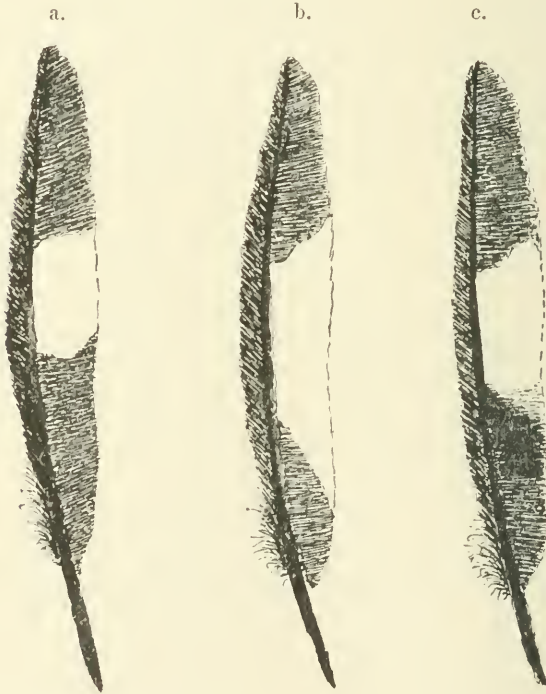
*Coccothraustes buvryi* Cabanis, J. f. O. 1862, p. 259.

*Coccothraustes coccothraustes buvryi* Cab. ; Hartert, Vög. pal. Fauna, p. 57.

♂ ad., March 25 ; ♂ ad., ♂ ad., ♀ ad., ♀ ad., March 31.  
H. Meskoutine.

The Algerian Hawfinch is quite distinct from the typical European bird. Cabanis's original description is not referred

Text-fig. 15.



Fourth primaries of : a. *Coccothraustes vulgaris buvryi* ;  
b, c. *Coccothraustes vulgaris typicus*.

to in the ' Catalogue of Birds ' (vol. xii. p. 36), and there is no specimen from Algeria in the British Museum. That the Algerian form is distinct, seems to have been overlooked since 1862 until the publication of Dr. Hartert's first volume on the Palearctic birds.

I have already (Bull. B. O. C. vol. xv. p. 37) referred to *C. v. burryi* as compared with examples of the Hawfinch from Europe. Judging by single examples, the birds from Asia Minor and from Tangier should be referred to typical *C. vulgaris*. *C. v. burryi* is, briefly, a decidedly paler and greyer bird in both sexes, while the white markings on the wings and tail are less extensive and the bill is not so heavy.

The white mark on the fourth primary of the male is, I think, rather an interesting feature. In typical *C. vulgaris* it almost invariably extends towards the base of the feather (see text-fig. 15, p. 192), though its size tends to vary, whereas in *C. v. burryi* it seems to have become fixed at a certain spot.

Hawfinches were fairly common and tame at H. Meskoutine, but we did not see them elsewhere. They were certainly not breeding up to the end of March, as we found them then in small companies.

PASSER DOMESTICUS (L.).

♂ ad. H. Meskoutine, March 18.

This specimen is very puzzling. It is like the English Sparrow, but all the feathers of the crown are chestnut with grey tips. When abrasion takes place, therefore, the bird must have a chestnut crown. In this it appears, from the description, to be like *Passer domesticus ahasver* Kleinsehm., but the distribution of that supposed race is at present very obscure. My specimen is unlike *P. d. tingitanus* Loche, which has black markings on the crown. Our knowledge of the House-Sparrows of North Africa seems to be in rather a confused state for want of proper material. It is natural for the collector to neglect House-Sparrows until he has collected everything else.

PASSER HISPANIOLENSIS (Temm.).

♂ ad. Biskra, March 10.

♂ ad. H. Meskoutine, April 2.

Both these specimens are typical.

The Spanish Sparrow was very common at Biskra, while at H. Meskoutine we did not observe it until the beginning

of April, when it appeared in numbers in trees where we had previously noticed many old nests.

FRINGILLA CŒLEBS AFRICANUS Levaill.

Hartert, Vög. pal. Fauna, p. 127.

♂ ad., ♂ ad., ♀ ad. H. Meskoutine, March 17, 26, & 29.

The Algerian Chaffinch is intermediate in colouring between the dark Morocco bird (*F. c. koenigi*) and the much paler Tunisian form (*F. c. spodiogenys*).

The bird was fairly common in Northern Algeria.

LINŒFA CANNABINA (L.).

*Acanthis cannabina nana* (Tsch.); Hartert, Vög. pal. Fauna, p. 75.

♂ ad., ♀ ad., ♂ ad. H. Meskoutine, March 24 & 25.

Linnets from N. Africa are, on the average, a shade shorter in the wing than European birds, but the variation is very small and I can find no other constant point of difference, so I prefer not to follow Dr. Hartert in separating them.

FRINGILLARIA SAHARÆ Tristr.

♂ ad. Biskra, March 15.

This was the only individual seen.

EMBERIZA MILLARIA L.

♀ ad. Biskra, March 11.

The Corn-Bunting was fairly common wherever there was cultivation.

EMBERIZA CIRLUS L.

♂ ad., ♂ ad., ♀ ad. H. Meskoutine, March 24, April 3 & 6.

The Cirl Bunting was fairly common and breeding at H. Meskoutine and at H. R'Hira. Were it not for its often-repeated note, we should frequently have passed this bird by, as it sits so close. We sometimes found it very difficult to locate by the note, which seems to have a ventriloquial effect.

EMBERIZA CIA L.

♂ ad., ♂ ad. Les Glacières, May 8 & 12.

The Meadow-Bunting was only met with above 3500 feet



on the Little Atlas Mountains. It was there fairly common, and was generally to be found on rough stony ground. The organs of the birds shot were in breeding-condition, and although I found no nest, there is no doubt that they were nesting.

ALAUDA ARBOREA L.

♀ ad. H. Meskoutine, March 22.

♀ ad., ♂ ad. H. R'Hira, April 20 and May 5.

The Wood-Lark was fairly common in the northern part of the country. It was breeding at H. R'Hira at the end of April, and in the Little Atlas in May up to an altitude of about 6000 feet.

AMMOMANES DESERTI ALGERIENSIS Sharpe.

♂ ad., ♀ ad., ♀ ad. Biskra, March 12 & 13.

This form of the Desert-Lark was common in the rocky hills round Biskra.

GALERIDA CRISTATA ARENICOLA Tristr.

Hartert, Vög. pal. Fauna, p. 232.

Ad. Biskra, March 15.

Dr. Hartert has kindly identified this specimen for me. It was the only example of *G. cristata* which I obtained in Algeria.

GALERIDA THECKLÆ SUPERFLUA.

Hartert, Vög. pal. Fauna, p. 238.

No. 5. ♀ ad. Biskra, March 8.

No. 16. ♀ ad. Biskra, March 12.

These two specimens are very puzzling. No. 5, Dr. Hartert tells me, is typical *G. t. superflua*, the other he considers a reddish variety of that form. It is quite as red as the supposed *G. t. deichleri* Erlanger, which Dr. Hartert has united with *G. t. superflua* owing to the two forms being found in the same locality. Although Crested Larks tend to vary according to their environment in a remarkable way, yet those found in any one region are generally constant in their coloration; and if my birds are really of the same race, we have, in this case, a striking exception to the rule.

I think it possible that the breeding-ranges of these two birds may be found to be distinct. For instance, at Biskra, although I shot my two specimens actually on the same ground, they were not then nesting, and it may be proved that one breeds in the oasis and the other in the desert. Should this be so, we could regard them as different races with separate breeding-areas.

*GALERIDA THECKLE HARTERTI* Erl.

Hartert, Vög. pal. Fauna, p. 238.

♀ ad., March 17; ♂ ad., March 25. H. Meskoutine.

This very dark form of *G. thecklæ* was common at H. Meskoutine.

*GARRULUS GLANDARIUS CERVICALIS* Bp.

♂ ad. H. R'Hira, May 1.

♂ ad., ♀ ad., May 11; ♀ ad., May 19. Les Glacières.

The Algerian Black-headed Jay was fairly common in the pine-forest at H. R'Hira and very abundant in the cedar-forest on the Little Atlas. The usual note is very much like that of our Jay, and the bird is also fond of imitating the notes of other species. I heard one imitating the cry of a Booted Eagle to perfection, and others often imitated that of the Buzzard very well. A nest which I found at an altitude of about 5500 feet contained four fresh eggs on May 18th; it was well concealed in the top of a small cedar-tree and the bird sat very closely.

*IVNX TORQUILLA* (L.).

♂ ad., March 22; ♀ ad., March 28; ♂ ad., April 2. H. Meskoutine.

The Wryneck was common at H. Meskoutine during the latter part of March and beginning of April. One bird was so confiding as to sit unmoved on the branch of a small olive while I shot another in the same tree, and did not fly off until I had all but touched it.

*SYRNIUM ALUCO MAURITANICUM*.

Witherby, Bull. B. O. C. vol. xv. p. 36.

Ad. Les Glacières, Little Atlas, April 1903: shot by M. Charles.

As I have already pointed out (*loc. cit.*), all the Tawny Owls from Morocco and Algeria which I have examined are remarkable for their dark coloration and for their constancy in this respect.

It is an interesting fact that in this region the Tawny Owl should be subject to so little individual variation, whereas in other regions, as is well known, it is notable for its tendency to vary individually.

It may be found that the dark coloration of the North-African bird is approached by a few isolated examples from elsewhere, but the constancy of the coloration in *S. a. mauritanicum* is a sufficiently striking and important feature, in my opinion, to warrant its separation as a geographical race. I had not the good fortune to shoot a specimen of the Tawny Owl in Algeria and I only once heard the bird at H. R'Hira. Mr. Meade-Waldo, who is familiar with it in Morocco, considers its note and habits very different from those of the European Tawny Owl. He tells me that in Morocco these birds nest, like Barn-Owls, in buildings, and not in trees as they generally do in Europe, and that they breed late, generally in May.

*NISAËTUS PENNATUS* (Gm.).

♂ ad. H. R'Hira, April 19.

The Booted Eagle was a fairly common breeding-bird in the fir-forest at H. R'Hira and rather less common in the cedar-forest at Les Glacières. I shot this male at a new but empty nest in a pine-tree. The female never seemed to leave the vicinity. Two days after I had killed the male, she had procured another mate. On April 23 (four days after the male was shot) an egg was laid, and one of the Eagles was brooding it while the other was sitting in a tree hard by.

*CIRCAËTUS GALLICUS* (Gm.).

♂ ad. H. R'Hira, April 27.

There were a good many Serpent-Eagles in the pine-forest at H. R'Hira. I put a bird off a large nest containing one egg in a pine-tree. Concealing myself near I could see both parents circling high overhead for a considerable time, then one gradually descended and pitched in a tree close by.

It then went off again, but soon returned and flew straight to the nest. It proved to be the male. Its crop contained a snake (*Tropidonotus viperinus*) about eighteen inches long, apparently uninjured. Mr. Pycraft has very kindly dissected this snake, and finds that, although there is no exterior injury apparent, the base of the skull has been fractured as well as the first two vertebræ. Mr. Pycraft thinks that this injury must have been caused by the beak of the bird.

ACCIPITER NISUS (L.).

*Accipiter nisus punicus* Erlanger, Orn. Monatsb. 1897, p. 192.

♀ ad. H. R'Hira, April 15.

♀ ad. Near Les Glacières (6600 feet), May 11.

Both these females are bluer than usual on the upper side. The wings measure  $9\frac{1}{2}$  inches. I can see no difference, such as described by von Erlanger, between the male bird from Algeria and that from Europe, but I have not had many Algerian specimens for comparison.

The ovaries of these two birds contained large eggs, and I think there is no doubt that they were nesting.

CACCABIS PETROSA (Gm.).

♂ ad. H. Meskoutine, March 17.

♀ ad. H. Meskoutine, April 6.

The Barbary Partridge was everywhere present, and was especially common at H. Meskoutine.

COTURNIX COMMUNIS Bonn.

♂ ad. H. Meskoutine, March 19.

Quails were plentiful at Biskra at the beginning of March, while there were a few at H. Meskoutine and also at H. R'Hira.

It may be of some interest to add the following scanty notes regarding a few of the migratory birds of which I did not obtain specimens:—

Cuckoo first seen on April 6. H. Meskoutine.

Golden Oriole first seen on April 21. H. R'Hira.

Common Bee-eater first seen on May 1. H. R'Hira.

Swallows and House-Martins were completing their nests at H. Meskontine in the first week in April. Mr. C. Dixon recorded ('Ibis,' 1882, p. 561) these birds as building in the middle of May, and argued that they were late breeders in Algeria. On the other hand, Mr. J. H. Gurney recorded their arrival in Algeria on February 18 and 19, and found House-Martins repairing their nests on Feb. 18 ('Ibis,' 1871, pp. 74 & 300).

Song-Thrushes were exceedingly numerous amongst the wild olive-trees at H. Meskontine until the beginning of April, when most of them disappeared. So far as I know, there is no record of a Song-Thrush breeding in North Africa.

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XIX.—On the Birds collected by the late W. G. Doggett on the Anglo-German Frontier of Uganda. By W. R. OGILVIE-GRANT.

FROM the notice which appeared in the obituary of 'The Ibis' for 1904 (p. 312) we learnt with regret that Mr. W. G. Doggett, the naturalist attached to the Anglo-German Boundary Commission under Lieut.-Col. C. Delmé-Radcliffe, had been drowned by the capsizing of a canoe while attempting to cross the River Kagera, the great western affluent of the Victoria Nyanza. His collections, which have been forwarded to the British Museum, contain about 450 admirably prepared skins, and include examples of two species (*Franco-colinus mulemæ* and *Tricholema radcliffei*) new to science, as well as of several species (such as *Pyromelana wertheri*, *Terpsiphone emini*, *Lybius rubrifacies*, &c.) not previously represented in the National Collection.

On looking over the birds sent home I was struck by the almost entire absence of many of the smaller and more interesting Passeres which I had hoped to find, such as the lesser Grass-Warblers (*Cisticola*, *Sylviella*, &c.), always of especial interest, and I wrote to Col. Delmé-Radcliffe, pointing out this deficiency and begging him to request Doggett to pay special attention to these birds. My letter